

—DRAFT— Race to the Top Fund (RTF):
Application Requirements and Priorities

Three Eligibility Requirements

1. Approved Phase I SFSF Application (Completed)

2. Approved Phase II SFSF Application (Plans to Complete)

3. No barriers linking student/teacher data: legal, statutory, regulatory* (Research and document where action is needed.)

Criteria for Absolute Priority

Applicant must describe how the state and participating LEAs intend to use RTF and other funds to implement four reform areas.

Overall Criteria

- Demonstrate significant progress.
- Make education funding a priority.
- Obtain stakeholder support, raise achievement, and close gaps.
- Demonstrate statewide capacities to implement, scale, and sustain plans.

Standards and Assessments

- Develop and adopt common standards.*
- Develop and implement common assessments.*
- Transition to enhances standards and high-quality assessments.

Data Systems

- Implement statewide longitudinal data system (reference America COMPETES Act).*
- Access and use state data.
- Use data to improve instruction.

Look to SIDS Grant Criteria.

Teachers and Leaders

- Identify alternative pathways.*
- Differentiate effectiveness based on performance.*
- Facilitate equitable distribution.
- Report effectiveness of preparation program.
- Provide effective support.

Look to TIF Grant.

School Improvement

- Intervene in lowest performing schools.
- Increase charter schools.*
- Turn around struggling schools.

Look to School Improvement Grant.

Competitive Priority

Emphasis on STEM: Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics

Invitational Priorities

Expansion and adaption of statewide longitudinal data systems

P-20 coordination and vertical alignment

School-level conditions for reform and innovation

Additional Requirements

Financial data

Budget (includes both RTF dollars and "other resources")

Major ARRA-Funded Programs

- State Fiscal Stabilization Fund (SFSF) (required for RTF application)
- Title I
- IDEA
- Title I School Improvement Grants (direct link to school improvement assurance)
- Ed-Tech Grants
- State Longitudinal Data Systems Grants (direct link to data assurance)
- I3 – Investing in Innovation Fund (direct link to invitational priority)
- Teacher Incentive Fund (direct link to teacher assurance)

Selection Criteria

Points will be announced in the final package. Additional considerations are the extent to which states set ambitious but achievable annual targets against each performance measure to support the credibility of the goals and plans.

State Reform Conditions Criteria: Used to assess a State's past progress and its success in creating conditions for reform in specific areas related to the four ARRA education reform areas.

Reform Plan Criteria: Used to assess States' plans for future efforts in the four ARRA reform areas.

	Selection Criteria
Standards and Assessments	Developing and adopting common standards
	Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments
	Supporting transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments
Data Systems to Support Instruction	Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system
	Accessing and using State data
	Using data to improve instruction
Great Teachers and Leaders	Providing alternative pathways for aspiring teachers and principals
	Differentiating teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance
	Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals
	Reporting the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs
	Providing effective support to teachers and principals
Turning Around Struggling Schools	Intervening in the lowest performing schools and LEAs
	Increasing the supply of high-quality charter schools
	Turning around struggling schools
Overall Selection Criteria	Demonstrating significant progress
	Making education funding a priority
	Enlisting statewide support and commitment
	Raising achievement and closing gaps
	Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale, and sustain proposed plans

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

November 04, 2009

Fact Sheet: The Race to the Top

Promoting Innovation, Reform, and Excellence in America's Public Schools

"America will not succeed in the 21st century unless we do a far better job of educating our sons and daughters... And the race starts today. I am issuing a challenge to our nation's governors and school boards, principals and teachers, businesses and non-profits, parents and students: if you set and enforce rigorous and challenging standards and assessments; if you put outstanding teachers at the front of the classroom; if you turn around failing schools – your state can win a Race to the Top grant that will not only help students outcompete workers around the world, but let them fulfill their God-given potential."

- President Barack Obama

July 24, 2009

Providing a high-quality education to every young American is vital to the health of our nation's democracy and the strength of our nation's economy. In a 21st century world, education is no longer just a pathway to opportunity and success – it is a prerequisite.

The Obama Administration is committed to reforming America's public schools to provide every child access to a complete and competitive education. President Obama recently presented states with an unprecedented challenge and the opportunity to compete in a "Race to the Top" designed to spur systemic reform and embrace innovative approaches to teaching and learning in America's schools. Backed by a historic \$4.35 billion investment, the reforms contained in the Race to the Top will help prepare America's students to graduate ready for college and career, and enable them to out-compete any worker, anywhere in the world.

Today, in Madison, Wisconsin, the President applauded progress across the nation as states undertake reforms that will enable them to better qualify for an award under the Race to the Top.

RACE TO THE TOP

In the coming weeks, the U.S. Department of Education will issue the final application and guidance for states under the Race to the Top. This competition will be conducted in two rounds – the first starting this month and the second in June of next year – with winners announced in April and September, 2010. To be eligible to compete, states

must have their second round State Fiscal Stabilization applications approved by the U.S. Department of Education and not have any legal, statutory or regulatory barriers to linking data on student achievement or student growth to teachers and principals for evaluation purposes.

The Race to the Top emphasizes the following reform areas:

- **Designing and implementing rigorous standards and high-quality assessments**, by encouraging states to work jointly toward a system of common academic standards that builds toward college and career readiness, and that includes improved assessments designed to measure critical knowledge and higher-order thinking skills.
- **Attracting and keeping great teachers and leaders in America's classrooms**, by expanding effective support to teachers and principals; reforming and improving teacher preparation; revising teacher evaluation, compensation, and retention policies to encourage and reward effectiveness; and working to ensure that our most talented teachers are placed in the schools and subjects where they are needed the most.
- **Supporting data systems that inform decisions and improve instruction**, by fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system, assessing and using data to drive instruction, and making data more accessible to key stakeholders.
- **Using innovation and effective approaches to turn-around struggling schools**, by asking states to prioritize and transform persistently low-performing schools.
- **Demonstrating and sustaining education reform**, by promoting collaborations between business leaders, educators, and other stakeholders to raise student achievement and close achievement gaps, and by expanding support for high-performing public charter schools, reinvigorating math and science education, and promoting other conditions favorable to innovation and reform.

A NATIONAL RESPONSE

In July, the U.S. Department of Education issued a notice of proposed priorities under the Race to the Top, and has received more than 3,700 comments from approximately 1,200 respondents on the various components of the program, including comments from 9 Governors, 20 State Education Officials, and over 200 education associations and organizations.

States and communities across the nation have recently undertaken efforts designed to promote education reforms that are consistent with the principles reflected under the Race to the Top.

Missouri became the 48th state, along with the District of Columbia, to join a national partnership led by the National Governors Association and the Chief State School Officers to develop a common core of new, rigorous college and career-ready standards in reading and math.

California recently enacted legislation to enable student achievement data to be linked to teacher and principal performance. Indiana now permits the use of student performance data for teacher evaluation and Wisconsin, with the support of the state teachers union, has recently introduced and is considering legislation to do the same. New York is also considering similar legislation.

Illinois, Louisiana, and Tennessee have all recently altered laws or policies affecting public charter schools to enable their expansion and success. Connecticut, Delaware, Indiana, Ohio and Rhode Island have recently advanced policies to preserve and strengthen public charter schools. Similar efforts are being considered in California, Idaho, New York, Massachusetts, Michigan and North Carolina.

Delaware has recently developed a new system of teacher evaluation which incorporates student achievement and sets classroom goals for teachers evaluated through various measures of student learning and growth. The system allows teachers, principals, and school administrators to engage in a process focused on improving teacher practice and increasing student success.

Austin, TX has developed an innovative approach to performance-based compensation and career advancement for teachers that rewards successful teachers who improve the achievement and growth of their students and who take on additional roles and responsibilities, such as mentoring new teachers.

Educators and city leaders in Jefferson County, CO have collaborated to develop an alternate compensation system for teachers, focused on student learning, teacher learning and teacher leadership. The proposed system would include multiple measures of student learning and growth gathered from the state's reading and math assessments, as well as incorporate incentives and goals for teams of teachers and a restructuring of the school day and possibly the school year.

New Haven, CT recently ratified a new four-year contract for their teachers, including a new teacher evaluation system that considers student learning gains in the assessment of teacher performance and that identifies and provides interventions for struggling teachers through a peer-assistance and review program . To promote innovation, New Haven will promote a new process for changing traditional conditions in schools – enabling reforms such as expanding the school day – and will facilitate the conversion of underperforming schools into charter schools, where the school principal will select and build his or her instructional team.

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